

# The Rediscovery of *Erosaria menkeana* (DESHAYES, 1863)

(Mollusca : Gastropoda)

BY

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(Plate 20)

CONSIDERABLE REFERENCE has already been made in the literature to a cowrie species that apparently remains clouded in synonymy. It is likely that earlier authors lacked access to an obviously rare species for comparison. I am certain that the shells illustrated in this paper definitely appear to be unrelated to one another, and should now be given adequate consideration, with one of them, *Erosaria menkeana* (DESHAYES, 1863) being regarded as a valid species once more.

The genus *Erosaria* TROSCHEL, 1863, with which I associate this species, usually has a characteristic morphology, a broad, flattened shell, with colored spotting. Therefore, shells of *Erosaria* follow this general description: shell ovate to sub-pyriform, not umbilicate, usually thickly margined, heavily calloused; tuberculate or smooth, with coarse teeth that do not cross the base and do not reach the margins; usually flattened, spreading; terminals only slightly produced, or in some cases not at all; shell may be marginally spotted, spotted over all, blotched, obscurely banded, or peripherally ringed with color. It would seem *E. menkeana* agrees well with this generic description.

*Erosaria (Erosaria) menkeana* (DESHAYES, 1863)

(Plate 20, Figure 1, 1 a)

Conch. Ile Réunion, Annexe E (Moll.): 139; pl. 13, figs. 21 - 22  
Syn.: *Cypraea modesta* (OWEN) SOWERBY (2<sup>ND</sup>), 1870  
Thesaurus Conchyl. 4: 11; pl. 322, figs. 333 - 334

Locality: Mauritius (Long. 20° 18' S; Lat. 57° 36' E).

Shell Measurements: Length 20.0 mm, width 13.0 mm,  
height 9.0 mm; labial teeth 16; columellar teeth 13.

This species is clearly and unmistakably illustrated in SOWERBY (2<sup>ND</sup>) (1870). With the discovery of a live-collected specimen, it seems to me this heretofore obscure species should be accepted as valid. Toward this end I offer the following illustrations and redescription.

Shell small for the genus, elongately ovate, broad, flattened, solid, strong, thickly formed; dorsum transversely rounded, laterally flattened centrally due to two abrupt contour angles that divide the shell into three equal parts; base and outer lip convex from margins to aperture; terminal strongly produced abapically, less so adapically; aperture straight, narrow; both columella and fossula dentate; fossula shallow, nearly obsolete; teeth large, strong, well defined on both outer lip and base, extending halfway to margins; margins thick, rounded, indistinct, barely angularly shouldered above; primary shell color milk-white; dorsum glossy, thickly flecked with numerous very fine chestnut-brown spots, becoming fewer in number and minutely larger on margins, part of base and outer lip; very faintly quadrimaculate at terminals; a narrow portion of base, outer lip, teeth, and interstices white.

This shell was sent to me for identification by an Australian correspondent. The locality given was Mauritius in the Indian Ocean; at the present time this locality remains unverified. In making a search of the literature, I found that SOWERBY (2<sup>ND</sup>) (1870, pl. 322, figs. 333, 334) provided drawings almost identical with the shell at hand. With the aid of these hand-colored illustrations one has little difficulty in identifying this shell as a species long thought to be synonymous with *Bistolida owenii owenii* (SOWERBY [1<sup>ST</sup>], 1837); SOWERBY (2<sup>ND</sup>) (1870, pl. 323, figs. 366 - 371); this paper (Plate 20, Figure 2). It may be of interest to note that REEVE (1846) and KIENER (1845) do not list the latter species even though it had been almost ten years since SOWERBY (2<sup>ND</sup>) described it.

In the text SOWERBY (2<sup>ND</sup>) (1870, p. 11, species 27) discussed the species under consideration under the name *Cypraea menkeana* OWEN (= *Cypraea menkeana* DESHAYES, 1863). When comparing this shell with *Bistolida owenii owenii* he said, "... it does not well agree." He then stated further, "... the shell which Mr. Hugh Owen

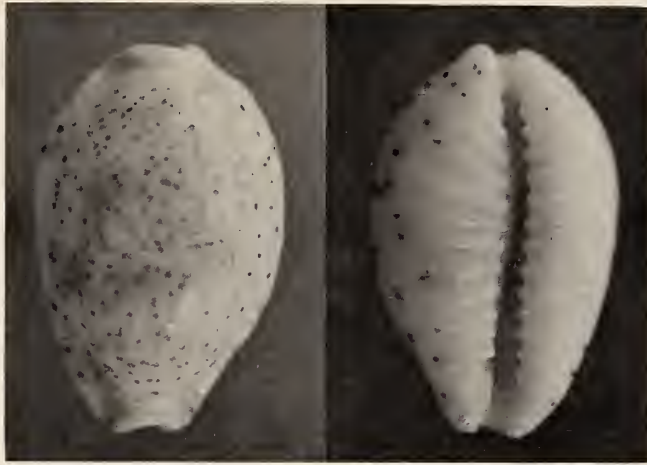


Figure 1  
*Erosaria menkeana* (DESHAYES, 1863) (x 2½)



Left Side

Right Side

Figure 1 a  
*Erosaria menkeana* (DESHAYES, 1863) (x 2½)



Figure 2  
*Bistolida owenii owenii*  
(SOWERBY, 1837) (x 3¼)



Figure 3  
*Bistolida owenii vasta*  
(SCHILDER & SCHILDER, 1938) (x 2½)